

college program to teach future auto-team mechanics and managers. Kyle Petty, a team owner and driver, donated automotive parts. Tobacco commission funds allowed Patrick Henry Community College, the county's lone institution of higher learning, to retool a derelict building into headquarters for a motor-sports training program and to rev up the curriculum. "We're actually getting people jobs," motor-sports instructor Mike Sharpe says, standing among brightly painted car bodies, reinforced racing frames, powerful engines and high-tech calibration equipment."

The Motorsports Facilities Fairness Act would provide certainty to track and speedway operators regarding the depreciation of their properties. This common sense proposal is necessary to allow these facilities to continue to enhance local and regional economies and to contribute to job growth.

The Motorsports Facilities Fairness Act responds to the recent decision of the IRS to question the long-standing depreciation treatment of motorsports complexes used by facility owners. For decades, motorsports facilities were classified as "theme and amusement facilities" for depreciation purposes. This long-standing treatment was widely applied and accepted, until now. Over the years, relying on this good faith understanding of the tax law, facility owners and operators invested hundreds of millions of dollars in building and upgrading these properties.

S. 1524 would merely allow the track owners to classify these facilities for tax purposes in the same way that they have done, without question, for years, or in some cases, decades.

I urge the Senate to "green flag" the process on this winning measure. Approve S. 1524, the Motorsports Facilities Fairness Act. Let's wave the "checkered flag" for jobs, economic growth and logic.

RACETRACK DEPRECIATION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to address an issue important to my State, and to a growing number of Americans: Motorsports. Born in Daytona Beach, racing today is the fastest growing sport in the country and has given birth to an economy unto itself.

With 38 track and speedway facilities in locations throughout Florida, including two of the Nation's larger tracks—Homestead-Miami and Daytona International Speedways—motor-sports contribute nearly \$2 billion annually to Florida alone.

Simply put, these tracks, whether large or small, create jobs and expand tourism.

The Internal Revenue Service has allowed these facilities to depreciate their property over a 7-year period. Now they are challenging this long-standing industry practice and treating racetracks differently than other entertainment complexes.

That is simply unfair and will have a dire economic effect, discouraging the capital investments that these facilities rely on to improve their product and attract the legions of fans that have been so valuable to small towns across the country.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting prompt enactment of S. 1524, the "Motorsports Fairness Act" to clarify that these facilities are indeed 7-year property for purposes of depreciation.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, tonight we will mark a historic occasion—the 20th anniversary of the International Republican Institute. I am honored to chair the Institute's board of directors, and to have been involved for 14 years with an organization that has done so much for so many. Its staff of experts, under its leadership in Washington, has for two decades fanned out across the globe, bringing the benefits of their experience and education to those who hunger for democracy. For 20 years IRI has worked to advance democracy, promote freedom and self-government, and support the rule of law and human rights. In doing this, IRI embodies the fundamental values on which the American political system is based, and which we must encourage around the world.

Why do we spend energy, money, time and expertise to promote freedom and democracy abroad? We do it because we know that, as Ronald Reagan said in 1982 when he cited the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings." In America, we enjoy the fundamental right to be free. But we also know that we will never enjoy our rights in the fullness of security until all of humanity is also free.

The promotion of democracy and fundamental human rights is thus an inextricable element of American foreign policy. We use our power not simply to enhance our security, but to promote our values—for the good of others. For 20 years IRI has monitored elections, trained political candidates, promoted government reform, helped organize civil society, and increased political participation. Its mission is vital, and IRI has performed it with success in over 75 countries.

Anyone who reads the newspapers can see how critical this mission is today. Iraq is the biggest democracy project in a generation, and IRI is active on the ground, making a difference on a daily basis. Beyond Iraq, there is a growing recognition that the lack of freedom in the Greater Middle East offends not only America's national values, but also threatens our security. In other regions too—Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and others—freedom is lack-

ing. When we confront these situations, the diagnosis is easy. The hard part is taking action. IRI takes action. Promoting democracy is a huge task—one IRI does superbly—and calls will only increase for it to do more.

I am confident it is up to the job. For 20 years the individuals who make up the International Republican Institute have made a positive difference in the world. While these are not the type of people to rest on their laurels, we should all recognize that these laurels are well deserved.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SALK POLIO VACCINE FIELD TRIALS

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I have always been one to support innovation. It is with the innovative researchers of this Nation and the world that have provided us with some of the greatest contributions in history. Inventions such as the computer, the Internet, the automobile, the airplane, and vaccines have transformed the world as we once knew it, to the world that we live in now.

I would like to take a moment and recognize yesterday's event commemorating April 26, 2004, as the 50th Anniversary of the Salk polio vaccine field trials, a truly significant day for our Nation.

On April 26, the March of Dimes and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, commemorated the 50th anniversary of the development of the Salk polio vaccine along with several other organizations. This day in April holds great significance for the nation as it was that day in 1954 that the first dose of the Salk vaccine was distributed to children at Franklin Sherman Elementary school in McLean, VA as part of the National Field Trial Program. In the months that followed, more than 1,800,000 school children, collectively referred to as "Polio Pioneers", participated in these trials.

The outcomes of these field trials were truly significant. Reports indicated that the Salk vaccine was 80-90 percent effective in preventing polio and in the four years following the trials, medical personnel administered 450 million doses of the vaccine, making it a standard fixture among childhood immunizations. By the end of 2003, poliomyelitis had been eliminated world-wide in all but 6 countries. The result of this vaccination—nearly 5 million children have been given the ability to walk who would otherwise have been paralyzed and 1.25 million childhood deaths have been averted.

The Salk polio vaccine is a great contribution to our nation and to the entire world. While poliovirus was eradicated from the United States by the early 1980's, it continues to exist in the wild in a limited number of regions around the world. Nevertheless, the World Health Organization has set 2005 as the target date for complete, global eradication of the virus. It is through the unwavering support and undying